Historic District Review Committee

Staff Report
July 13, 2009

Action Items

CAPP 2009-0009 Bluemont Community Center: Renovation and Rear Addition in the Bluemont Historic District. MCPI 632-15-4042.

Background

The Bluemont Community Center, 33846 Snickersville Turnpike, was constructed in 1923 and served as the local school for the next four decades. In 1988, Loudoun County began using the building as the community center for the village of Bluemont and the surrounding area. The building is deeply setback (187') from the road. It is a symmetrical two-story frame building covered with stucco. It has a standing seam metal, hipped roof and a stone foundation. In the first floor facade, large double hung 12/12 windows in strings of five flank a central hipped roof portico sheltering a door with a round transom and sidelights. Windows in the second story consist of a central paired window flanked by three individual windows. The rear elevation is nearly identical to the front. The side elevations match, having only two windows in the second story. The Bluemont Community Center is a contributing resource in the Bluemont Historic District.

The applicant proposes changes to the Bluemont Community Center in order to meet current code requirements for childcare facilities and accessibility. Extra building space is needed in order to meet the codes, requiring renovation of the existing building and a new addition. The addition will be on the rear of the building and will not be visible from the road. The applicant plans for the building and its new addition to be LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified once the renovations are complete.

In a Zoning Administration Referral dated July 6, 2009, the proposed renovation and addition are subject to a Special Exception permit due to the community center and childcare center uses. A separate application to the County for the Special Exception is pending. The zoning referral also notes that a proposed trash and recycling dumpster and concrete pad located in the eastern side buffer yard and parking in the western side buffer yard are not permitted in these locations. However, buffer yards can be modified during the Special Exception process.

Analysis

Renovation

The Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic Districts (ABOT Guidelines) address changes to an existing building in the Guidelines for Existing Structures chapter. Specific changes to the

exterior include painting the stucco, wood trim, and fascia; stucco repair; refurbishing and painting the existing 12/12 wood double hung windows; and installing new interior storm windows.

Paint
Currently, the Bluemont Community Center is painted white with blue trim and a black roof. The applicant proposes to retain the blue trim, but will use a light grey or cream color for the building. This color scheme is appropriate to the period and function of the institutional building. Since all trim elements will be painted the same color, the color scheme creates a unified appearance (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Paint and Color, Guidelines 1 and 2, pg. 138). The roof will not be repainted.

Staff suggests that the applicant refer to the Maintenance segment (pg. 137) of the Paint and Color section for recommendations for successful painting practices.

Stucco
Since existing gas lines and other defunct mechanical equipment will be removed from the exterior of the building, stucco patching will be required. The applicant states that the guidelines for stucco repair will be followed, including patching the area with stucco that matches the historic stucco and using a professional plasterer for repairs. The exterior of the building will be repainted once repairs are completed (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Stucco, Guidelines 1-8, pg. 131).

Windows
The existing 12/12 double-hung wood windows will be refurbished and bottom sashes will remain operable. All glazing putty and broken glazing will be replaced. Hardware and wood sashes and frames will be replaced if irreparable. This treatment is the most ideal for historic buildings and meets the ABOT Guidelines. Nonetheless, staff notes that if a window is determined to be in disrepair, then repairs should be made by patching, splicing, consolidating, or otherwise reinforcing the existing sash or frame rather than replacing it in entirety. If a window part, such as an entire sash or frame, is beyond repair, then only those parts that are beyond repair should be replaced and not the entire window. If replacing a window sash is required, then it should match the original in design and dimensions, pane configuration, detailing, and materials. This includes insuring that the sash has true divided lights or a three-part simulated divided light with interior and exterior fixed muntins and an integral spacing bar. Finally, if sashes require replacement, then consolidation of the original wood sashes in the most visible elevations of the building is recommended (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Existing Structures – Elements: Windows, Guidelines 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 10, pg. 110).

The exterior aluminum storm windows on the Bluemont Community Center will be replaced with interior aluminum storm windows. The storm windows should match the divisions of the sash lines, placing meeting rails in the same location as the meeting rail of the double hung window. Additionally, interior storms should not have wide frames, mullions, or muntins visible from the building exterior. The storm windows should have ventilation holes and/or removable clips to avoid condensation damage and ensure

proper maintenance. The glass should be clear and the frames should be painted the same color as the "primary window frame." In this case, the interior window frames are white.

The proposed interior aluminum storm windows will have a removable and operable bottom sash that can be interchanged with screen inserts. The frames will be narrower than the existing window sashes and not visible from the exterior. Additionally, the meeting rail division will match the meeting rail of the existing windows. The storm windows will be painted the same color as the frame and constructed with clear glass.

Doors
The existing front door and surround were recently refurbished and is not included in the proposed building rehabilitation.

Addition
Location, Orientation, and Attachment
The Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic Districts (ABOT Guidelines) specifically address additions in the Guidelines for Additions chapter. Overall, additions should not extensively alter the form and massing of the historic building. Instead, the addition should be attached in a subordinate location, maintaining the original orientation of the building. The location should also ensure that the essential form and integrity of the original building be retained should the addition be removed (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Introduction, Guideline 1, pg. 85 and Location, Orientation, and Attachment, Guidelines 1-3, pg. 86).

The proposed addition will be located to the rear of the Bluemont Community Center, a subordinate position that retains the original orientation of the building. This location is not visible to the passerby from Snickersville Turnpike. It will be attached to the building by a hyphen; therefore, decreasing the impact to the original building form.

Design
The design of the addition should not be an exact copy of the existing historic building and it should not use the exact wall plane, roofline, or cornice height (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Design, Inappropriate Treatments 1 and 2, pg. 86). Instead, the addition should be subordinate to and differentiated from the historic building while maintaining a compatible ratio of solids and voids and architectural style. The design should also minimize the removal of characteristic historic building materials (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Design, Guidelines 1 – 4, pg. 86).

The proposed addition closely resembles the design and architectural style of the existing community center, using the same size and rhythm of windows and doors. It also maintains the cornice height. However, the addition is smaller and the roof is lower than the historic building. Since the addition is connected to the historic building by a

hyphen, it does not maintain the same wall plane or roofline and the cornice line acts as a visual connection between the existing building and the new addition.

What will differentiate the historic building from the new addition is a 13' wide by 8' long hyphen clad with modern architectural materials. The hyphen will be covered by a wood screen comprised of 4"-wide unpainted horizontal Cambia slats with a toasted finish of a dark walnut color. Cambia is a thermally modified wood that uses high heat to improve stability and decay resistance in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner. The slats will be spaced 6" apart. Beneath the screen in each elevation will be fixed pane windows measuring 5' x 5' with a 2'8" x 5' window on top in the first floor and a 1'6" x 5' window on top in the second floor. This 8'-wide hyphen with modern elements reflects a later period of development and demonstrates that the hyphen and addition are new construction. At the same time, limiting the modern elements to the hyphen allows the addition to be similar to and not a radical departure from the original design as recommended in the ABOT Guidelines.

The narrow hyphen also prevents a large amount of historic material from being removed from the Bluemont Community Center. Nonetheless, the rear portico will be removed to make way for the new addition. To mitigate the loss of this architectural feature, the exterior doorway will be retained inside the building and new entry portico will reflect the existing front entry portico and will reuse the rear portico columns.

Roof
The roof on the addition should maintain the roof pitch and form of the existing historic building but be secondary in height (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Roof, Guidelines 1 – 3, pg. 88). The hipped roof on the proposed addition has the same pitch form as the Bluemont Community Center. It is also secondary in height. The hyphen roof will be flat, another design feature differentiating the historic part of the building from the new addition.

Materials and Details
Materials, building elements, architectural details, and colors should be compatible with the existing building. Modern materials that detract from the historic appearance of the building should not be used. Instead, the materials should replicate the original material in dimensions, proportions, and appearance. However, the HDRC will consider alternative materials in the district if they are compatible with the existing building (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Additions: Materials and Details, Inappropriate Treatment 1, pg. 88; Guidelines 1 – 3, pg. 88).

1. Walls

The applicant originally proposed Exterior Insulating Finish System (EIFS) StoTherm Classic NExT for the walls of the addition. However, synthetic stucco, namely EIFS is specifically identified as an inappropriate substitute material and does not meet the ABOT Guidelines for materials (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Materials and Textures, Inappropriate Treatment 4, pg. 80; Guideline 10, pg. 80). Therefore, the applicant has proposed painted fiber cement clapboard with a smooth

finish instead. The applicant is also exploring real stucco and if budget allows will opt for this material.

The ABOT Guidelines state that modern substitutes compatible with historic materials may be acceptable if the substitute material replicates the visual qualities and workability of the original material. Fiber cement clapboard is an acceptable substitute material if it is applied in traditional patterns. The siding should have a 5" to 7" reveal and should have a smooth finish to meet the ABOT Guidelines. Staff requests specific information on the reveal of the proposed cementitious siding to determine if it is appropriate. Staff also notes that real stucco that matches the appearance of the existing stucco is the more compatible option.

2. Foundation

The foundation for the addition will be concrete with an imitation stone veneer. It will match the height of the stone foundation on the existing historic building. The proposed stone veneer will be manufactured by Eldorado and Verona Hillstone with "over-grout" is proposed (Photos 1 and 2). Distinguishing the foundation from the rest of the building meets the ABOT Guidelines for new construction. Cladding the foundation with an approved stone veneer on all elevations of the addition also meets the guidelines. The proposed stone veneer appears to be similar to the color, texture, shapes, and sizes of the existing stone foundation (Photo 3). Staff requests that the applicant bring a sample of the product to the HDRC meeting to evaluate whether the proposed veneer is an appropriate substitute material (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Foundation, Guidelines 1-4, and 6, pg. 77; Guidelines for Materials: Stone and Brick, Guideline 7, pg. 129).

The mortar should match the color, material, texture, joint size, and tooling of the historic building mortar (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Stone and Brick, Guideline 2, pg. 129). The existing mortar has a tooled, flat bead joint. "Over-grout" is the proposed mortar joint, which will be tooled by masons to match the existing mortar joints. Additionally, the mortar will match the color, and texture of the existing foundation mortar.

1. Roof

The roof on the proposed addition will be a pre-fabricated standing seam metal roof. Each section will be 16" wide with 1" battens. The existing roof has "low-profile battens" that are 16.5" apart; therefore, the dimensions, proportions, and appearance of the prefabricated roof match the historic building. The roof will be galvanized aluminum with a clear factory finish in order to meet the LEED standard for roof color. Dark roofs, such as the existing black roof are not energy efficient and do not meet the standard. Still, a galvanized metal roof is an appropriate material and color for roofs in the Bluemont Historic District and relates to the standing seam metal roof on the existing Community Center. Snow guards matching the existing will also be installed on the addition roof

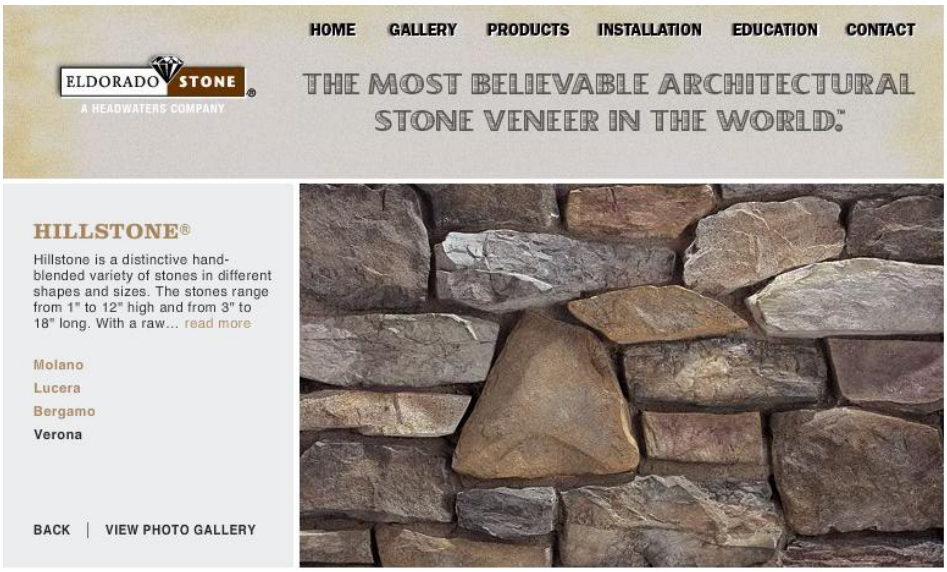

Photo 1: Detail of proposed stone veneer, Eldorado Stone: Verona Hillshade. Source: http://www.eldoradostone.com/flashsite/

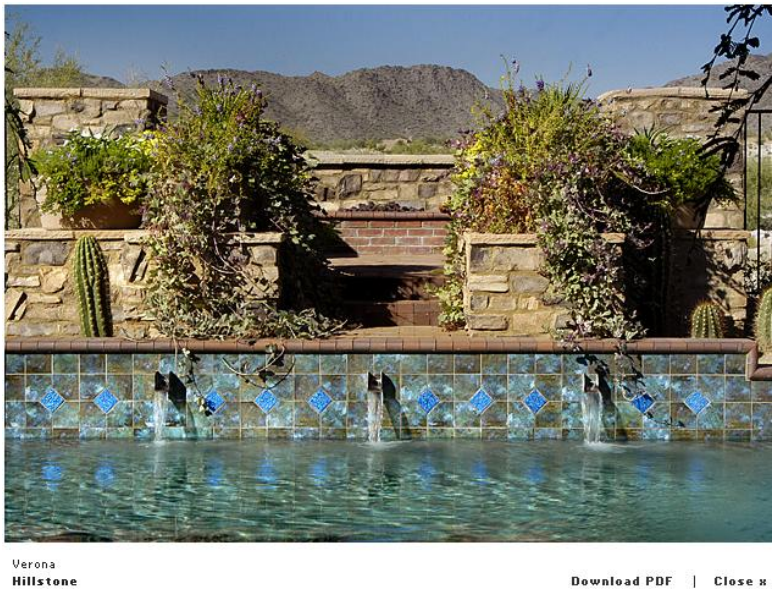

Photo 2: Example of installed proposed stone veneer, Eldorado Stone: Verona Hillshade. Source: http://www.eldoradostone.com/flashsite/

Photo 3: Existing foundation stone on the Bluemont Community Center.

(ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Roof Form and Materials, text, pg. 65; Guideline 3.a., pg. 66; Guidelines for Additions: Materials and Details, Guideline 2, pg. 88).

The hyphen roof will be EPDM (ethylene propylene diene M-class rubber), a synthetic rubber used for floor roofs. Since this roof will not be visible from the ground, this is an acceptable roofing material.

2. Gutter and Downspouts

The gutter and downspouts will match the existing and will be painted metal; matching the existing materials meets the ABOT Guidelines.

3. Cornice and Overhang

In Bluemont, most historic buildings have simple wood cornices, including the Bluemont Community Center. The community center has a 12" wood fascia board with a crown molding. This element will be replicated on the proposed addition. Additionally, the 18" roof overhang with a wood soffit will match the existing building. These elements meet the ABOT Guidelines for materials and design, as well as provide a visual link to the existing historic building (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Cornices, Overhangs, and Parapets, text, pg. 69; Guidelines 2 and 3, pg. 70; Guidelines for Additions: Architectural Details and Decoration, Guidelines 1 and 2, pg. 78).

4. Portico

A proposed portico at the new entrance into the addition will protect Community Center users from both sun and rain while they enter and exit the building. Porches and porticos should reflect the size, materials, proportion, and placement of historic porches in the district (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Front and Rear Porches, Guidelines 2 and 3, pg. 75). The front portico has a standing seam metal hipped roof with a simple wood cornice with crown molding and Tuscan order columns. The existing rear portico, which will be removed to make way for the addition, is similar but has a flat roof. The proposed portico on the new addition is similar to the design and materials of the front portico but slightly smaller. The columns from the rear portico will be reused in the new portico and the trim profiles will match the existing front portico, thereby maintaining important porch details. It will be located in the middle bay of the addition, similar in placement of the existing front and rear porticos.

5. Doors

Doors in new construction should relate to styles found historically in the district, in this case the Bluemont Community Center. The trim profiles should have the same dimensional qualities as the trim on the historic building (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Doors, Windows, and Shutters, Guidelines 5-7, pg. 73). The proposed primary entrance door will be wood with six lights, similar to the front entrance of the historic building. The surround will also be wood and will have 12-light sidelights with a four-light transom. The proposed rear exit door will be wood and similar in design to the front entrance. It will have six-light sidelights and a four-light transom. Trim

profiles will match the existing front doorway. Wood is the preferred material for doors in the historic district.

6. Windows

Windows in the proposed addition will be the same dimensions as those in the existing historic building. They will be made by Marvin Windows, the Wood Ultimate Hung Magnum type. The windows will be 12/12 double hung windows with 7/8" simulated divided lights with an integral spacing bar. The trim will be wood and will match the profiles of existing windows. The application states that interior storm windows will be installed; however, since the windows will be double paned, this element is not necessary and has been removed. The size, material, dimensions, and three-part construction of the windows are appropriate for the proposed addition (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Doors, Windows, and Shutters, Guidelines 9-11, pg. 74).

7. Color

The color of the new addition should be informed by precedent, i.e. the Bluemont Community Center (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for New Construction: Color, Guideline 1, pg. 84). This building is painted white with blue trim; however, the building will be repainted a light gray or cream color. The same colors are proposed for the new addition. These colors are also appropriate for an early twentieth century institutional building (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Materials: Color, Guideline 1, pg. 84).

Site Elements

Patio

A patio is proposed for the north elevation of the new addition. It will function as an exterior public space outside the new main entrance. It also blends with a sloped sidewalk proposed to meet accessibility requirements. The sloped sidewalk negates the handrail required for the side of steeper ramps and the construction of an accessible ramp or lift on the front of the historic building.

The proposed patio will be set back approximately 9' from the northern edge of the historic building. The bottom step to the patio will be nearly flush with the edge of the building and the first tier of the ramp will extend approximately 10' beyond the building edge. The ramp will begin on the south (street) end, sloping up and away from the street. A 6' wide sidewalk will span the length of the ramp. A 2' wide and 2' high bench will create the front retaining wall of the ramp. It will be the same height as the foundation. The patio surface and sloped sidewalk will be concrete. The application text states that the patio will be stamped concrete; however, the architect states and the plans show that the patio will be plain with expansion joints. The retaining walls on the patio, ramp, and seating, will be faced with Eldorado veneer, Verona Hillstone with over-grout, as proposed for the new foundation. The bench will be capped with an Eldorado flagstone wall cap measuring 24" wide and 2.25" high.

In order to avoid building the concrete patio flush with the existing building, an 8' wide strip of Cambia wood will be installed to connect the patio with the old school. This

wood strip also connects the 8'-wide hyphen to the patio, again differentiating the historic building from the new addition. A matching 8'-wide Cambia strip will be installed on the opposite end of the patio and extend along the rear of the building. Using this material will allow the walkway to be easily removed should the County decide to build an auditorium addition off the rear of the building in the future. Painting the Cambia has not been proposed. The steps will be concrete, as will the sidewalk leading to the steps. Stair railing will be simple pipe railing painted black. The grade will be elevated to within 30" of the rear patio to preclude the need for a railing on the rear Cambia strip.

The ABOT Guidelines recommend that outdoor living spaces be located to minimize the impact on the historic appearance of the building or site. Historically appropriate materials and colors should be used, and those that are out of character with the historic district, such as vinyl, composites, or unpainted pressure treated wood, should be avoided. Additionally, materials should relate to the historic building or elements on the lot while refraining from using forms or patterns that convey a false sense of history (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Outdoor Living Spaces, Inappropriate Treatments, 1-4; Guidelines 1-3, pg. 45).

The location behind the historic building is an appropriate location for the proposed patio. Additionally, it is not visible from the street. The use of the imitation stone veneer is in keeping with both the new addition foundation and the foundation of the existing building. However, staff requests that the applicant bring a sample to the HDRC meeting to evaluate the appropriateness of the material. Concrete is an appropriate patio surface and ramp material as it is used on the front steps of the historic building. The decision not to stamp the concrete is appropriate since the ABOT Guidelines recommend against creating patterns that convey a false sense of history. Furthermore, a concrete patio surface is in keeping with the institutional use of both the new addition and the early twentieth century school. Concrete steps and a metal pipe railing are historically appropriate and match the front steps of the building.

The proposal for using Cambia on the surface of the patio is an appropriate treatment. The material is wood and meets the guidelines. The unpainted detail will differentiate the old portion of the building from the new addition. At the same time, the Cambia strip will protect the integrity of the historic building since concrete will not be poured directly adjacent to the building. Similarly, the rear Cambia strip serves as both a differentiating design feature and a removable piece that will easily allow for a second addition. Cambria is also a material that meets LEED standards.

Ramps
The ABOT Guidelines state that ramps should be located where they have the least visual effect on a building or setting and ensure that they can be removed without permanently damaging the historic building. Materials should be compatible with the historic building (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Ramps, Guidelines 1-3, pg. 50).

As noted in the patio section, the ramp is located to the rear of the building. It was designed as part of the new addition so that the historic building would not be impacted by the ramp. The first tier of the ramp will extend beyond the edge of the historic building approximately 10', but sloping nature of the site will make it not visible from the road. The ramp materials, concrete and stone veneer (granted it is approved for the foundation) facing are appropriate and relate to the historic building and its addition.

Parking Area
Driveways and parking areas are outside the HDRC purview; however, the ABOT Guidelines include recommendations for compatibility. Large expanses of bright white or gray concrete or asphalt should be avoided in visible areas and not placed in front yards. Existing driveways or parking areas should be maintained. Their surface materials should be replaced with materials matching the original in size, texture, color, and finish. New materials should be compatible with the district, with the most appropriate material being aggregate finished concrete or gravel. Additionally, permeable surfaces are recommended to reduce stormwater runoff. Finally, parking should be located to the side or rear of the existing building and screened with plantings if visible from the public way (ABOT Guidelines, Guidelines for Site Elements: Driveways and Parking Areas, Inappropriate Treatments 2 and 3; Guidelines 1, 2, 4-6, pg. 52-53).

Currently, the driveway and parking areas have a bluestone gravel surface. This surface material will be retained, meeting the guidelines for materials. Three to four new parking spaces are proposed for the southeast lot to accommodate staff. They will be to the side and rear of the building and will be gravel, meeting the guidelines. Two new accessible spaces with a central aisle will be added to the northern lot. These spaces will be paved to meet ADA requirements. These spaces are also to the side of the building and will have minimal pavement that will not be visible from the road.

Additional Review
Staff notes that mechanical and utilities screening and lighting are additional site elements that require HDRC review and a CAPP before their installation or construction.

Findings

1. Rehabilitating the exterior of the existing historic building by patching stucco, painting the building with a similar color scheme, refurbishing the windows, and replacing exterior storm windows with interior storm windows meets the ABOT Guidelines.
2. The proposed addition is on the rear of the Bluemont Community Center and not visible from the public way, maintaining the original setting and orientation of the historic building.
3. The proposed addition is subordinate to and differentiated from the historic building, while the design maintains a similar roof form and pitch, foundation

height, and relationship between solids and voids, meeting the historic district guidelines.

4. The materials, details, and colors for the proposed windows, doors, roof, portico, gutters and downspouts, and cornice and overhang are compatible with the existing building and meet the ABOT Guidelines.
5. The narrow hyphen prevents a large amount of materials from being removed from the historic building while differentiating the new addition from the old by its modern materials and design.
6. Siting the patio and accessible ramp to the rear of the historic building is an appropriate location for these new outdoor elements.
7. Patio materials, concrete, artificial stone facing and capping, are compatible with the historic building as well as the new addition.
8. The Cambia patio "decking" decreases the impact to the historic building while differentiating the existing building from the new addition and patio. The rear section easily allows for possible changes to the building in the future.
9. Adding a minimal amount of gravel parking spaces on one side of the building and two paved accessible parking spaces to the other side meets the recommendations for parking areas.
10. LEED Certification is consistent with the Green Guidelines for New Construction in Historic Districts.

Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

Conditions

Staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Repair or replacement of existing windows follows the Guidelines for Windows.
2. The fiber cement clapboard has a 5" to 7" reveal.
3. If real stucco is affordable, it should match the existing stucco in appearance.
4. The imitation stone is similar in color, texture, shape, and size to the existing stone foundation.

Suggested Motions

1. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0009 for the proposed renovation and addition to the Bluemont Community Center, 33846 Snickersville Turnpike, in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont,*

Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic and Cultural Conservation District based on the following findings (see findings above)….and the following conditions….

2. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee approve Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0009 for the proposed renovation and addition to the Bluemont Community Center, 33846 Snickersville Turnpike, in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic and Cultural Conservation Districts based on the following findings…(see findings above).*
3. *I move that the Historic District Review Committee defer Certificate of Appropriateness 2009-0009 for the proposed renovation and addition to the Bluemont Community Center, 33846 Snickersville Turnpike, in accordance with the Loudoun County Historic District Guidelines for the Aldie, Bluemont, Oatlands, and Taylorstown Historic and Cultural Conservation Districts based on the following findings…(see findings above)...*
4. *I move alternate motion…*